

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9240

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, RH, UK

SUBJECT: THE TIMES ARTICLE

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE BY DAVID SPANIER APPEARED IN THE JANUARY 7 EDITION OF THE TIMES UNDER THE TITLE, "DE-PRESSING REPORTS FROM MR. RICHARD".

BEGIN TEXT: AS MR. CROSLAND, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY, AND HIS ADVISERS STUDY THE TELEGRAMS WHICH MR. IVOR RICHARD IS SENDING BACK FROM HIS AFRICAN "SHUTTLE", SO FEARS ARE DEEPENING THAT THE LONG AND ARDUOUS EFFORT BRITAIN HAS MADE TO REACH A SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA IS ABOUT TO RUN INTO THE SAND.

DESPITE MR. RICHARD'S FRIENDLY RECEPTION IN MOZAMBIQUE YESTERDAY, IT IS NOW ACCEPTED THAT THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO CHANCE OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE RECONVENING BY THE TARGET DATE OF JANUARY 17. MR. RICHARD IS THE CONFERENCE

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CHAIRMAN.

WORSE, IT IS BEGINNING TO LOOK EXTREMELY DOUBTFUL IF THE CONFERENCE WILL RESUME AT ALL--AT LEAST IN ITS PRESENT FORM. THE MOST LIKELY COURSE IS A PERIOD OF MARKING TIME, UNTIL THE NEW AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION HAS HAD TIME TO THINK ABOUT ITS AFRICAN POLICY.

THE MAIN REASON FOR GLOOM IS THE CONTINUED OBDURACY

OF MR. IAN SMITH, THE RHODESIAN PRIME MINISTER. IT IS BEING RELUCTANTLY CONCEDED IN WHITEHALL THAT WHATEVEGLR. SMITH SEEMED TO HAVE AGREED IN HIS HISTORIC BROADCAST OF LAST SEPTEMBER--WHEN HE ACCEPTED THE KISSINGER PLAN--HE HAS NOW CHANGED HIS MIND. MR. RICHARD'S REPORT ON HIS LATEST MEETING WITH MR. SMITH IN SALISBURY WAS EVIDENTLY MOST DEPRESSING.

ALL HOPE HAS NOT BEEN GIVEN UP, HOWEVER. THE CRUCIAL EVENT NOW IS THE MEETING OF THE "FRONT-LINE" AFRICAN PRESIDENTS IN LUSAKA THIS WEEKEND. IF THEY GIVE THEIR SUPPORT TO THE NEW BRITISH PLAN--WHICH CALLS FOR A BRITISH PRESENCE TO "HOLD THE RING" DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD BEFORE MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA--THEN THERE IS A DISTINCT CHANCE THAT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE CAN BE RESCUED, AND AN AGREEMENT REACHED ON SETTING UP AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT IN SALISBURY.

BUT IF, AS SEEMS ALL TOO LIKELY, THE LUSAKA SUMMIT RENEWS ITS CALL FOR AN INTENSIFICATION OF THE GUERRILLA WAR, MR. RICHARD'S MISSION WILL BECOME EXTREMELY DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE. IT WAS REPORTED FROM LUSAKA LAST NIGHT THAT MR. RICHARD WOULD BE THERE AT THE TIME OF THE SUMMIT. THIS COULD NOT BE CONFIRMED IN LONDON. MR. SMITH HIMSELF, AS A RHODESIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY BACKGROUND PAPER WHICH HAS REACHED THE TIMES MAKES CLEAR, SEES NO MERIT WHATEVER IN A BRITISH PRESENCE IN RHODESIA. "WHETHER ONE WISHES TO TERM BRITISH 'SUPERVISION' OF THE TRANSITION TO MAJORITY RULE AS 'RESPONSIBILITY WITHOUT POWER' OR 'POWER WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITY' IS SECONDARY TO THE FACT THAT BRITAIN, NEVER HAVING RULED IN RHODESIA, UNCLASSIFIED

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IS PATENTLY OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION", THE PAPER STATES. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL GOVERNOR-GENERALSHIP OR RESIDENT COMMISSION, THE PAPER ADDS, ARE MORAL AUTHORITY, EFFECTIVE EXECUTIVE AND LEGAL POWER, AND WILLINGNESS BY THE PRINCIPAL PARTIES TO ALLOW THE NEW AUTHORITY TO FUNCTION AND ENSURE A MODICUM OF COOPERATION. NONE OF THE CONDITIONS EXISTS, THE PAPER ARGUES, AND THIS WOULD MEAN THAT A BRITISH ADMINISTRATION IN RHODESIA WOULD NOT BE RESPECTED BY ANY OF THE PARTIES CONCERNED. "THE FACT MUST BE FACED THAT THERE IS NO ROOM FOR BRITAIN MERELY AS AN ARBITRATOR AND INTERMEDIARY, SINCE NO SETTLEMENT SATISFACTORY TO ALL PARTIES IS POSSIBLE", IT CONCLUDES. END TEXT

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